

For a Time We Cannot See: Living Today in Light of Heaven by Crawford Loritts, Moody Publishers, Chicago, 2005. (11 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols)

1. Written in Our Hearts.

“Although heaven is often mentioned in the Bible, it’s difficult to form a clear picture of what it will be like. In the Scriptures, heaven is described more than it is explained. We are left with a sense of mystery that piques our interest and fuels our anticipation. Here is a partial list, describing our destiny:

“The Bible tells us, for example, that heaven is where God dwells (1 Kings 8:22-23; Isaiah 66:1). In that dwelling place, God first thought of us and formed us (Psalm 139:13; Ephesians 3:15). Heaven is the residence of angelic beings (Mathew 18:10). It is our Savior’s residence (Mark 16:19; Acts 1:9-11) and a place of endless worship (Isaiah 6:1-3; Revelation 4).

“Heaven is where we will be rewarded (Matthew 5:12). It is the place of justice and impartiality (Ephesians 6:9). It is the place of our inheritance (1 Peter 1:4). Heaven is our origin (Ephesians 3:15) and the destiny of every follower of Christ (John 14:1-3; 2 Corinthians 5:1-8).

“Philippians 3:20 tells us, “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.” We will not see heaven until we die, but the Bible teaches that the longing for heaven is a dominant motivation for living the Christian life. This calling and longing is written in the heart of every true follower of Christ.” (p. 13)

2. Welcome Home.

“Have you seen the movie *Antwan Fisher*? This film tells the moving story of a young man who struggles with anger and pain because of the abuse he experienced growing up in a foster home. He feels disconnected because he doesn’t know his family. His deepest desire is for family, to know to whom he belongs, to have a home.

“While serving in the navy, Antwan is encouraged to find his family by a navy psychologist (played by Denzel Washington), who serves as a mentor and father figure in his life. With bits and pieces of information, Antwan heads out on his search, and he is successful. Then a uncle takes him to meet his mother.

“As he enters the apartment of the woman who gave birth to him in prison, he is filled with anticipation and hope that this is going to be a joyful reunion. But it’s not. She sits there, not knowing how to respond. It’s as if she’s in shock. The meeting is a disappointment.

“Disappointed and once again rejected, Antwan returns to the home of his aunt. He walks through the door, and to his surprise he finds a room full of people -- his extended family that has gathered to meet him. He is swallowed up in a sea of love and acceptance. And when he walks into the dining room, there is an enormous feast, a banquet in his honor. His grandmother, the matriarch of the family, says, ‘Welcome home.’

“As we live the Christian life, we must embrace the tension of both living this life to its fullest down here and at the same time understanding that this is not our home. We are pilgrims on a journey to our real home, where there is family and a banquet waiting for us, and a Savior eager to say, ‘Welcome home.’” (p. 15-16)

3. Eternity is a powerful motivation.

“Eternity is a powerful motivation. Someone once said that if you have a *why* for living, you can stand almost any *how*. Our home in heaven is our motivation and destiny. When we live up to that sense of destiny at the center of our lives, we will experience purpose, passion and perspective. We have been called to live for a time we cannot see.” (p.18)

4. Only One Way to God.

“In the words of Josh McDowell, there are many ways to Christ, but only one way to God, and that is through Christ” (John 14:6). (p. 25)

5. The Power of Perseverance.

“In 1 Corinthians 15:58, Paul says we are to be ‘immovable.’ In the original Greek language, this word is *ametakenasis*, which literally means “not with motion.” Whereas diligence (‘steadfastness’) has to do with identifying what is most important and not moving away from your focus, being ‘immovable’ means perseverance--not quitting because of pressure or adversity.” (p. 40)

6. True Meaning a Person’s Greatness.

“The true meaning of a person’s greatness is not seen in what they accomplish, but in what it takes to stop them.” (p. 40)

7. Pray for Power Equal to Your Tasks.

“Phillips Brooks said, ‘Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers. Pray for power equal to your tasks.’ The doing of the work is not the miracle; no, we *become* the

miracle in the process of doing the work.” (p. 42)

8. Unless You Persevere.

“God won’t give you what you want because you won’t stick around long enough to get what you need.” (p. 43)

9. Serving in Obscurity, Living Faithfully.

“Crawford Loritts’ great-grandfather Peter Loritts appeared to live a decidedly unremarkable life. He was just an illiterate, uncelebrated former slave who happened to deeply love God and be committed to his family. On evening when Crawford Loritts was honored, commemorating the faithfulness of God and ministry, [he] was struck by the thought: “Could this be what Peter prayed about on the front porch?”

“[Crawford receives] more recognition that [his] parents and grandparents ever had. But recognition and greatness are very two different things. Greatness is buried behind Thomas Chapel, where Peter and Milton were laid, and side by side at Old Dominion cemetery in Roanoke, Virginia, at the graves of [his] parents. Their bodies were buried, but these great souls live on in the greatest place of all--and [he] will see them again. They hoisted [him] on their shoulders and believed God for what they could not experience in their own generation. They served in obscurity, but lived faithfully.” (p 54-55)

10. God Gives Leadership Positions to Serve.

“Nowhere in the Bible will you find leadership described primarily as a position. God gives the position to lead as a platform to serve and express His heart and character to others.” (p. 56)

11. Spiritual Footprints.

“I remember sitting in front of the television as a child, spellbound by the performance of Sammy Davis, Jr. He was enormously talented as a dancer, singer, comedian, and actor. He performed with an energy and magnetic charisma that sprang from natural talent, not technological spectacle or electronic enhancement. And he became a standard, a model for other entertainers to follow.

“One of the most-committed disciples was Gregory Hines, the award-winning entertainer who starred both in film and on stage. When Davis dies some years ago from complications from throat cancer, Hines paid tribute to his beloved mentor during his memorial service.

“Hines described how he and his brothers, when they were kids, used to sneak into Harlem’s Apollo Theater to watch Sammy Davis Jr. perform with his uncles. He was inspired to model his own performances after those

of Davis--who eventually helped him get started in the business. Through the years a deep affection and bond developed between them.

“And then Hines told a moving story about visiting Davis a few weeks before he passed away. Hines knew the disease was terminal, and he wanted to say thank you and good-bye to the man who had done so much to shape his career.

“When Hines walked into the house, he was struck by the toll the cancer had taken. Always a slight man, Davis was even more frail and emaciated. The cancer had robbed the singer of his voice, so Hines did most of the talking. He told Davis how much he had meant to him, thanked him for all he had done for him. He said good-bye and affectionately kissed Davis on the cheek and got up to leave.

“As Hines walked toward the door he heard the shuffling of feet. He turned and saw Davis behind him. The mentor had one last message, one last charge, to give his student.

“Davis pretended as if he had a basketball in his hands and passed it to Hines. That gesture said it all: “I have gone as far as I can. This is the end of the line for me, so what I have I give it to you. The ball is in your hands. You have to take it to a time that I cannot see.” Gregory Hines left the house determined to do all that he could to keep, preserve, and build on the legacy.

“I am moved by the story because it is a compelling picture of the nature and cycle of influence God has called all of us to have upon others. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are on our journey to heaven--our home, and our ultimate reward. But long after we are gone, until the Lord returns, heaven’s work continues. And those we influence--friends, family members, and associates--continue to live. They go to a time that we cannot experience or see. Every life is a transition to another era.

“The truth of the matter is that to live means to influence. Even if a person doesn’t intend to leave a legacy, he or she will. That issue is not even on the table. Every life is a personal story about destiny that is read by those who know the person. We are all telling a story.

“Think about that. Each day you are shaping your legacy. Your values and convictions, and how you live them out through your words and your actions, will influence everyone around you. If you are a parent, this is especially sobering because your children will grow up to be like you in ways you can hardly comprehend.

“When we die, our work is complete. It is finished; we can’t do it over again. The question is: What kind of legacy have you left for the next generation?” (p. 91-93)